

Foster Care Review Board

2018-2019 Annual Report & Recommendations



Advocating permanent families for children

2018 DATA SNAPSHOT



STATS AT-A-GLANCE

- 4,084 CHILDREN ENTERED FOSTER CARE
- 33% OF CHILDREN ENTERING CARE HAD PREVIOUS OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS
- 3,956 CHILDREN LEFT FOSTER CARE
- 47% OF CHILDREN RETURNED HOME
- 21% OF CHILDREN REVIEWED WERE ADOPTED

2018 REVIEWS

- 9,795 CHILDREN REVIEWED
- 6,812 CASES REVIEWED
- 420 REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 28% AGENCY POLICY VIOLATIONS
- 34% LEGAL BARRIERS
- 26% CASE PLAN BARRIERS
- 4% ADOPTION SERVICE DELAYS
- 5% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD TIMELY
- 1% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 17 MONTHS OR LONGER

- 1,550 CHILDREN
- 35% LEGALLY FREE FOR ADOPTION
- 23% IN CARE FIVE OR MORE YEARS

SC HEART GALLERY

- 2,365 INQUIRIES
- 227 ADOPTION EXHIBITS
- 142 CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHED AND 127 VIDEOTAPED
- 38 VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS
- 80 CHILDREN MATCHED WITH FAMILIES

ADOPTIONS

- 457 FINALIZED ADOPTIONS
- 21% WITHIN 24 MONTHS
- 10% AGE 13 AND OLDER

PEOPLE POWER

- 200 VOLUNTEERS
- 7,701 CASE REVIEW HOURS
- 9,788 TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
- 26 BOARDS COMPLETED SERVICE PROJECTS

2018 REVIEW BOARD OF THE YEAR

- REVIEW BOARD 7D, SPARTANBURG COUNTY

2018 REVIEW BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

- MILLERCIN WEEKS, REVIEW BOARD 5B, RICHLAND COUNTY

Data contained in this annual report represents children reported by the South Carolina Department of Social Services who remain in foster care at least four consecutive months and are reviewed by the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The South Carolina Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) is supported by the South Carolina State Board of Directors appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The State Board meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing and coordinating the activities of local review boards. The Foster Care Review Board's State Board also makes recommendations in an annual report to the Governor and the South Carolina General Assembly.

State Board 2018 Recommendations

INCREASED TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION FOR FOSTER PARENTS

In light of the growing body of scientific evidence that trauma impacts childhood brain development¹, and our state's continuing need to promote well-prepared foster families, the State Board recommends that foster parents in our state be afforded greater education and training opportunities for developing their skills as trauma-informed care providers².

REVIEW OF SECURITY PROTOCOL AT REVIEW HEARINGS

The State Board recommends a review of security procedures and protocol currently in effect at review meetings by either the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division or other similarly well-qualified public safety agency or organization. The issuance of identification badges for all Foster Care Review Board volunteer members is also recommended so that volunteers are clearly identifiable at review meetings and courtroom proceedings.

¹Sukel, Kayt (2015). Early life experience, critical periods, and Brain Development. Retrieved from <https://dana.org/article/early-life-experience-critical-periods-and-brain-development>

²KVC Health Systems. (2017). First ever study of trauma-informed foster care shows stunning results. Retrieved from <https://www.kvc.org/blog/first-ever-study-trauma-informed-foster-care-shows-stunning-results/>

³Science Direct. (2017) KVC's bridging the way home: an innovative approach to the application of trauma systems therapy in child welfare. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740917301445>

MEET THE STATE BOARD



Monica Githens Hill, AA (Finlandia University) (Chairwoman, State Board of Directors):

Monica was born in Mt. Holly, New Jersey, but grew up in Spartanburg, and now resides in Inman, South Carolina. Monica worked professionally in the real estate industry for many years and has always been drawn to volunteer activities. She has served as President of the Finlandia University Alumni Board and the Congregational Nursing Program. In 2006, Monica joined the Foster Care Review Board in Spartanburg County and she was elected Chairperson of the State Board in 2017, serving from the 4th Congressional District. Monica also serves as a non-voting member of the South Carolina Heart Gallery Foundation Board of Directors. Monica is an active member of her Devenger Road ARP Church in Greenville. Monica is widowed and the proud new mother of an adult child, Priscilla Helen Hill, a 2019 Converse College Graduate whom she recently adopted. Monica loves to travel and uses her foreign language abilities

whenever she can pursue her passion to explore new places around the world.



Jo Breeden Hecker, BA (Lander University), M.Ed. (University of South Carolina):

Jo is a life-long South Carolinian and retired educator and school administrator. She served in various capacities within the public school system of the Midlands area, ranging from school teacher to assistant principal, and later principal. Jo's commitment to children and education has been life-long and continued after her retirement in 1999 when she became an educational consultant and served as a guest lecturer on middle school Initiatives. Jo's volunteer service is extensive and includes work on behalf of education, medical care, race and cultural appreciation as well as service as a Sunday school volunteer. Jo has received numerous awards and honorariums including a 1999 key to her city, Blythewood. Jo has served on the Review Board since 2000, a member of the State Board since

2005, and served as Chairperson of the State Board from 2014-2017. Jo is a parishioner at Transfiguration Catholic Church. She is married to Robert P. Hecker and has one son, Robert P. Hecker, Jr.



Andrea McCoy, BS (University of South Carolina), certification in non-profit management (Winthrop University):

Andrea is a life-long South Carolinian who was born and raised in Florence, and moved to Columbia for college where she met her husband, Stephfon. Andrea has been a member of the Foster Care Review Board since 2015 and a member of the State Board since 2017. For 18 years Andrea worked as Executive Assistant and Public Relations Director for Bible Way Church of Atlas Road, which serves as a church home to more than 14,000 members. Andrea is now a Project Manager with a major corporation and is active in numerous community service activities, including as a State Board member with Affordable Housing Resources and Sistercare, and as an Advisory Board Member with S.C. Mentor. Andrea has repeatedly been recognized for her volunteer service with awards and honorariums; however, the experiences that she is most proud of are having served

on the planning committee for S.C. Dental Access Days, where more than 1,500 patients received over \$500,000 worth of dental care in two days, and managing the We Are The Village project, resulting in Christmas gifts for nearly 400 kinship care and homeless families in the Midlands area. Andrea enjoys gardening, travel, solving puzzles and visiting museums. Andrea and Stephfon are the proud parents of one child, a daughter, Dr. Alexis McCoy of Dallas, Texas.



MEET THE STATE BOARD



Chuck Koches, BS (Michigan Tech.), M.B.A. (University of Virginia): As a resident of South Carolina for 45 years, Chuck has been a member of the Foster Care Review Board for 15 years, with eight of those years as a member of the State Board of Directors. Now retired, Chuck has more than 40 years of experience in manufacturing and administration as well as employment and organizational development in the paper-making industry. Chuck served as a volunteer with Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts of America, Meals on Wheels, Hands of Christ and Darkness to Light as well as an elder and adult Sunday school teacher at Yeamans Park Presbyterian Church. Married to Mary Mena Koches for 54 years, the couple has four adult children and 10 grandchildren. He enjoys volunteer work, gardening and family get-togethers.



Martha "Sissy" Brock, BA (Winthrop College): Sissy is a life-long resident of South Carolina and retired educator who has always believed that learning could and should be fun. She taught several subjects during her 30-year tenure, including physical education, science, home economics and health, as well as coached girls' basketball and sponsored student council. Sissy's affinity for child welfare made her a natural for service on the Foster Care Review Board, to which she was appointed in 2004, elected to the State Board of Directors in 2006, and previously served as the State Board Chairperson. Sissy's volunteer service has been diverse in scope. She has served 47 years on the Cherokee County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, more than 30 of those years as Chairperson; is a volunteer with the Cherokee County School Mentor Program and serves in leadership roles as a member of the Gaffney

Rotary Club. She is President of the Cherokee County Family YMCA and is also on the Board of Directors for Spartanburg Community College. Sissy has been recognized for her community service with numerous awards. She is an active member of Buford Street Methodist Church and is married to Donald Brock. They have two children, a daughter, Martha, a son, D.J., and three grandchildren.



Dan Bracken, BA (University of South Carolina): Dan is a life-long resident of South Carolina. Born in Easley, SC, Dan currently resides in Powdersville. Dan is employed in the real estate field and was appointed to the Foster Care Review Board in 2012, serving the 3rd Congressional District, and later elected to serve on the State Board in 2016. Dan also finds time to participate in numerous community service activities, but he has a special interest in child welfare issues. Dan and his wife Nicole previously served as foster parents and are the parents of five children, three of whom were adopted. Dan attends Grace Church and in his free time, he enjoys running, exercising at the YMCA, reading and watching Clemson football.

SUMMARY OF REVIEWS



9,795

FCRB analyzes ongoing, comparative data of children in foster care in order to gain a better understanding of the trends impacting the system, as well as future implications related to permanency for each child reviewed.

During calendar year 2018, 44 local review boards held 420 local review board meetings, completing 9,795 children reviewed for 6,812 children cases in foster care. In 2018, there was a two percent increase in the number of reviews held and over 23 percent increase in the number of children reviewed.

Data regarding entry into foster care for 4,158 children was received from DSS and entered in the FCRB data-management system during calendar year 2018. Local review boards held reviews for 2,034 of these children and 2,124 children either left foster care prior to a case review or had not been reviewed as of Dec. 31, 2018.

INDICATOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CASES REVIEWED	3,630	4,032	4,175	5,533	6,812
CHILDREN REVIEWED	5,914	6,711	6,892	9,639	9,795
REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS	418	424	427	425	420
CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	1829	1,838	1,927	1,933	1,899
CHILDREN RE-ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	418	915	970	1,269	1,087
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	1,676	1,704	1,824	1,995	2,034

Areas of Concern

12,960

The monthly review process allows local review boards to identify systemic concerns that are barriers to permanence for children in foster care. These system deficiencies, or areas of concern, are items that are not in compliance with federal law, state law or DSS agency policy. Areas of Concern detailed: (<http://fcrb.sc.gov>)

In 2018 local review boards identified 12,960 areas of concern:

- Legal Barriers 4,437
- Policy Violations 3,691
- Case Plan Barriers 3,362
- Hearings Not Held Timely 724
- Adoption Services Delayed 605
- Hearings Not Held 141



SUMMARY OF REVIEWS

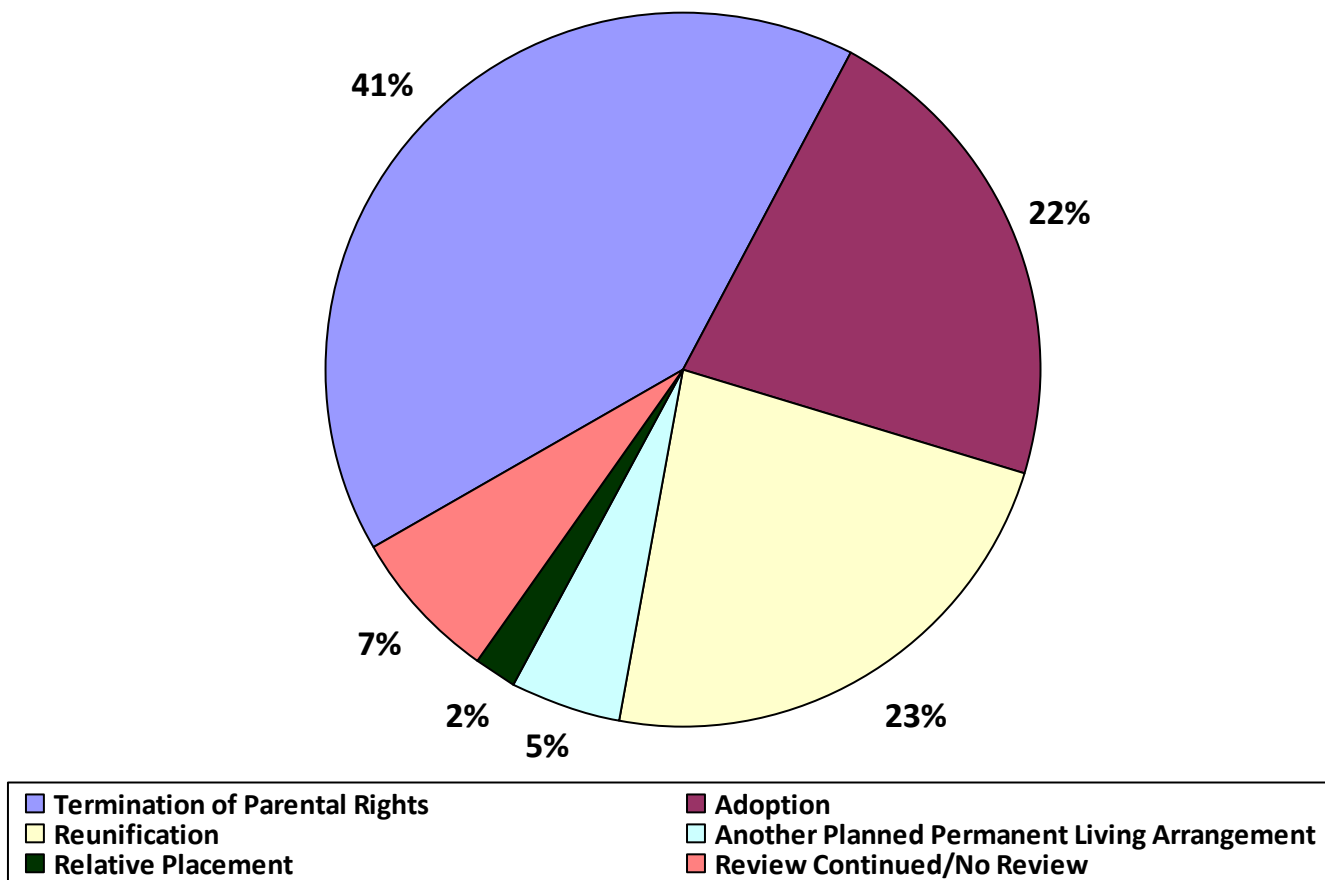
Case Decisions and Recommendations

Local review boards carefully consider input from interested parties prior to issuing a recommendation for each child's case. Interested parties are invited by DSS to attend FCRB hearings. Recommendations are sent to the Family Court, DSS and Guardians ad Litem.

If a required interested party is not invited or if additional information is needed for the board members to make a permanency recommendation, no recommendation is made and the review is continued. Reviews that are continued or not held are rescheduled, usually within three months of the original review date.

The graph below illustrates the percentage and type for each recommendation issued by local review boards at the most recent child-specific review in 2018.

Review Board Recommendations



ENTERING FOSTER CARE



4,084

The number of children who entered foster care between January and December 2018 is 4,084. This is a significant increase than in 2017.

Twenty-one percent of children entering foster care in 2018 entered due to physical neglect, while 23 percent entered care due to abuse. The remaining children entered foster care due to drug exposure/testing positive for drugs by either the parent or child (21 percent), for reasons not reported (9 percent), and abandonment or voluntary placement (1 percent).

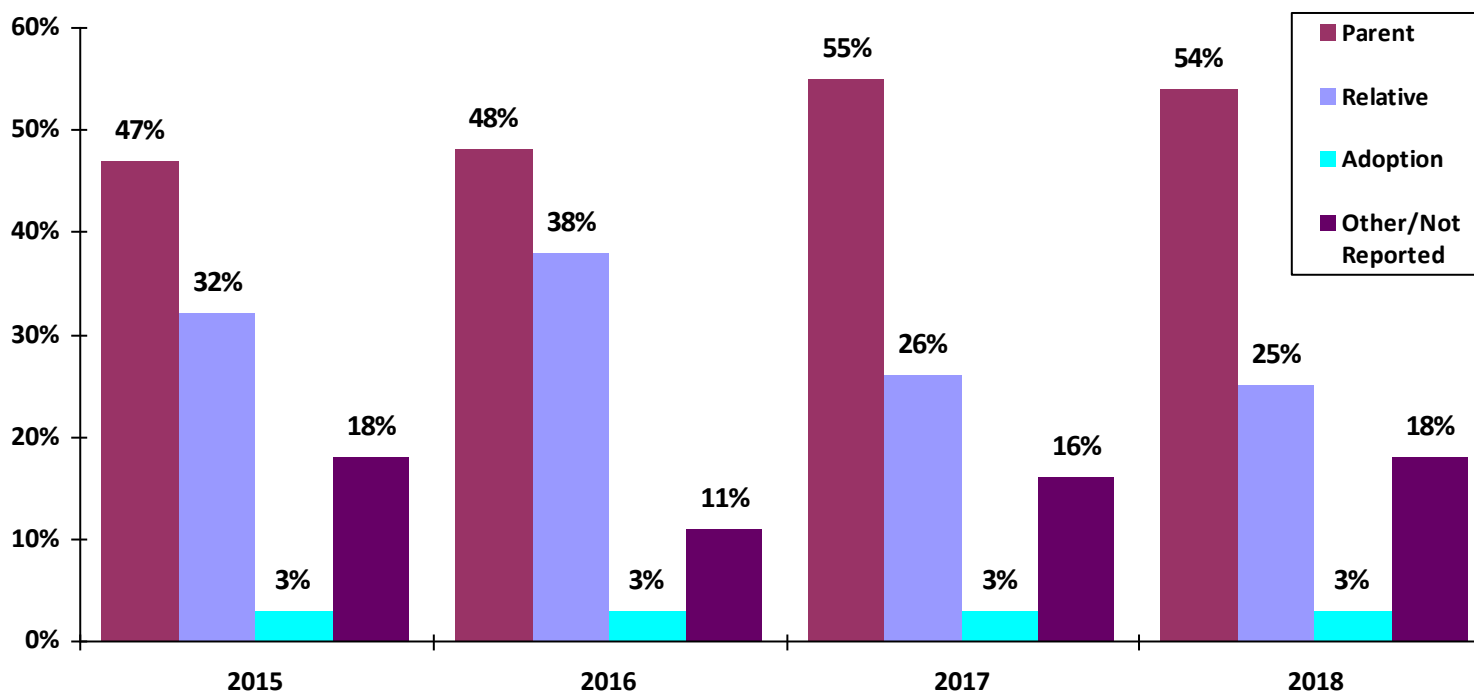
Previous Out-of-Home Placements

1,394

Of the 4,084 children reported to have entered foster care in 2018, 33 percent had at least one reported previous out-of-home placement. Of the 1,394, 54 percent entering foster care came from the home of a parent, 25 percent from the home of a relative, and three percent from an adoptive home.

FCRB reports on all out-of-home placements for children who enter foster care because moving from home to home or going in and out of foster care creates additional trauma for a child. The chart below displays prior placement data for the most recent entry to foster care by calendar year.

Placement prior to most recent entry





LEAVING FOSTER CARE

3,956

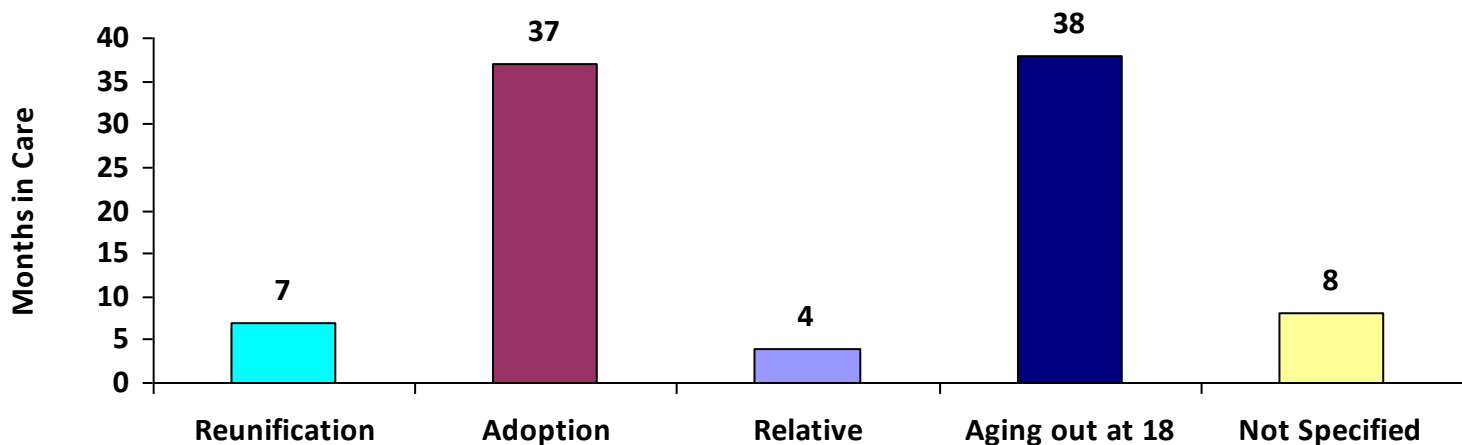
DSS reported that 3,956 children left the foster care system in 2018. Local review boards reviewed 2,034 of these children prior to them leaving foster care. The remaining 1,922 children left DSS custody before local review boards conducted a review.

Pursuant to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), returning a child to a parent or finalizing an adoption are the most permanent options for children who leave foster care. In 2018, 47 percent of children reviewed were returned to a parent or had a finalized adoption. The following table summarizes data for all children leaving foster care in 2018.

INDICATOR	ALL CHILDREN	CHILDREN REVIEWED	CHILDREN NOT REVIEWED
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE	3,956	2,034	1,922
PERMANENCY OUTCOMES			
REUNIFICATION	2,053	969	1,084
FINALIZED ADOPTION	457	441	16
OTHER OUTCOMES			
RELATIVE CUSTODY	1059	319	740
EMANCIPATED OR TURNED 18	285	261	24
OTHER /NOT REPORTED	102	44	58

The graph below provides the average number of months a child remains in foster care based on the indicator for leaving foster care in 2018.

Number of Months in Care by Reason Left Care



ADOPTIONS

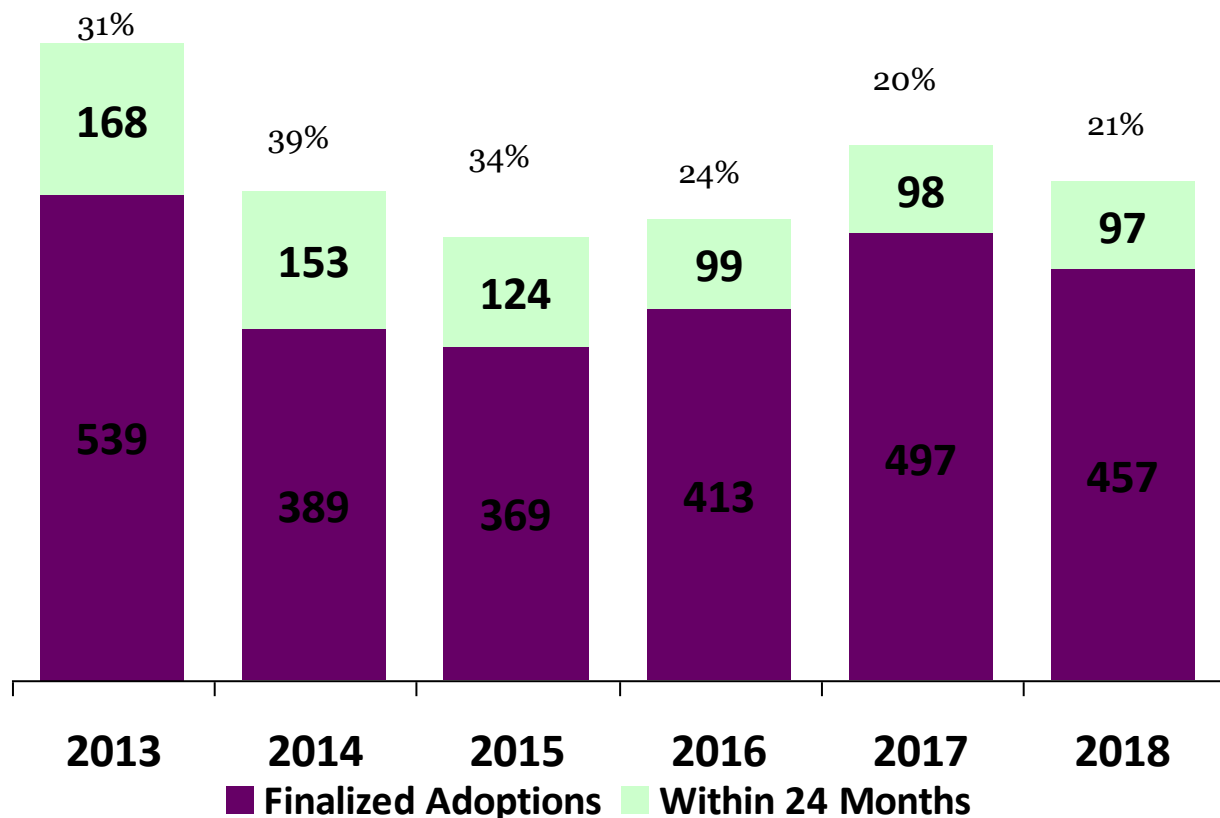


457

Of all children who left foster care in 2018, 457 had finalized adoptions; 97 of these adoptions were completed within the federal standard of 24 months. That is significantly lower than 2017. The average length of time a child spends in foster care before a finalized adoption is 36 months.

The average age at adoption was 6.8 years. In 2018, adoptions were finalized for 50 children age 13 and older. Teen adoptions accounted for 10 percent of all finalized adoptions.

Finalized Adoptions by Calendar Year



Percentage Completed within Federal Standard of 24 months



REMAINING IN CARE

1,550

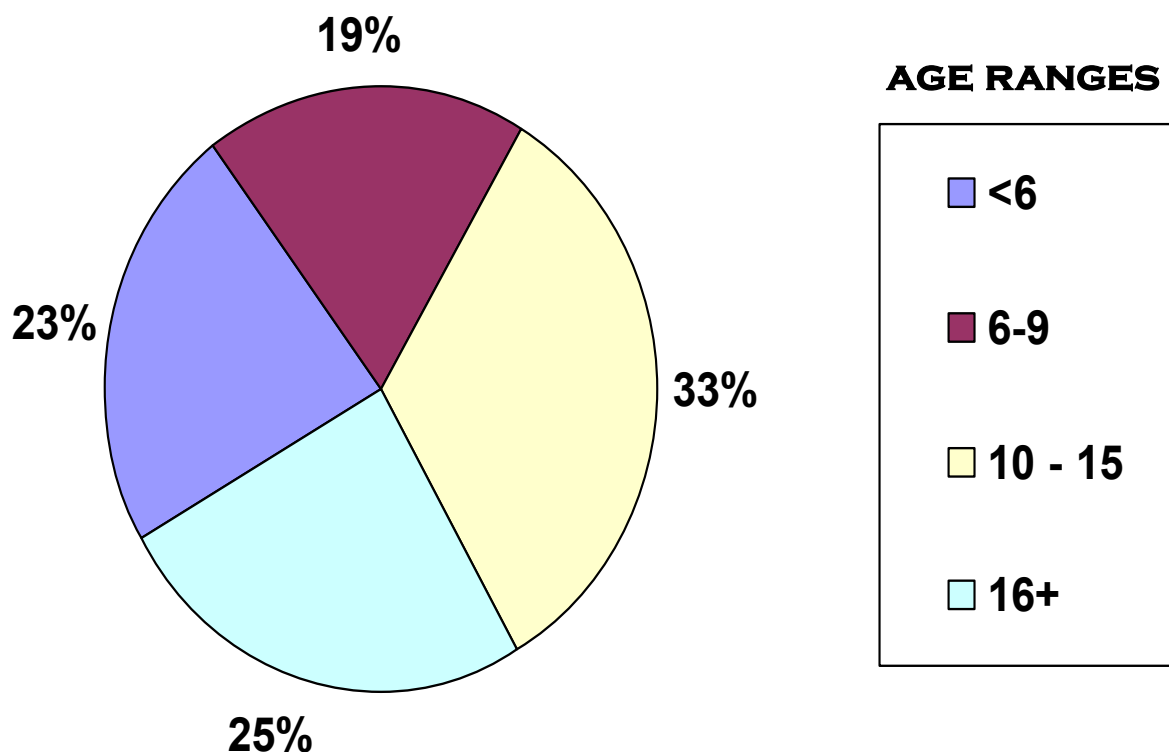
DSS reported to FCRB that there were 4,567 children in foster care as of Dec 31, 2018. Of these, 1,550 have been in the foster care system since their most recent foster care entry for 17 continuous months or longer.

The average length of time in care for these children is five years. The length of time in foster care ranges from 17 months to 18 years, and 23 percent of children have spent five or more years in foster care.

The graph below illustrates the age break-down for children in foster care for 17 months or longer.

Children in Foster Care for 17 Months or Longer

AGE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018



HEART GALLERY

During 2018, the South Carolina Heart Gallery continued to provide child-specific recruitment through community exhibits featuring framed portraits and biographies of waiting children. Social media highlights and videos produced by the SC Heart Gallery *Foundation* generated the most response in inquiries from families already approved to adopt as well as new families requesting to initiate the adoption application process. The Heart Gallery model demonstrates consistent success across the United States and Canada in matching waiting children with adoptive families, especially as the program is able to personalize each child's story and give them an individual voice. From 2005 – 2018, 1,701 children attended SC Heart Gallery photo shoots; since 2014, 563 children also had video profiles produced. As of 12/31/18, the cumulative match rate for children featured by the SC Heart Gallery is 55%.



2018 STATISTICS:

142	CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHED
127	CHILDREN VIDEOTAPED
38	VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS
227	PUBLIC EXHIBITS/MEDIA FEATURES
2,365	INQUIRIES RECEIVED FROM FAMILIES INTERESTED IN ADOPTING
80	CHILDREN MATCHED WITH FAMILIES
130	NEW SC FAMILIES INITIATED THE ADOPTION PROCESS
46	HOME STUDIES COMPLETED AND ACCEPTED FOR APPROVAL



Heart Gallery exhibits at Orangeburg's Cornerstone Community Church (above) and the Conway Library (left).

HEART GALLERY

In South Carolina,
486 *children are legally free
for adoption.*



OUTCOMES BY COUNTY



The following table compares 2018 Review Board data in South Carolina's 46 counties for children reviewed, children entering/re-entering care, children leaving care and permanency. FCRB considers permanency as a child being returned to a parent or having a finalized adoption. For children who left care but did not achieve permanency, 1,059 went to the custody of a relative and 387 turned 18, or the reason they left care was not provided.

For children entering and leaving care, these numbers reflect all children reported to the FCRB by DSS to include children who were reviewed and children that DSS reported leaving care prior to a review being held.

County	Children Reviewed	Cases Reviewed	# Entered FC	Previous Out-of-Home Placement	# Left FC	Permanency		Other Outcomes	
						% Returned to parent	% Adopted	% Relative Custody	% Other
State Total	9,795	6,813	4,158	33% (1,393)	3,956	52% (2,053)	12%(457)	26% (1,059)	10% (387)
Abbeville	27	10	23	3	20	8	0	10	2
Aiken	219	190	109	37	104	36	10	45	13
Allendale	16	5	9	1	9	1	0	6	2
Anderson	609	433	136	49	162	82	24	43	13
Bamberg	14	17	18	7	10	7	0	3	0
Barnwell	64	36	20	6	22	9	0	7	6
Beaufort	126	81	48	6	47	20	6	16	5
Berkeley	175	165	137	73	123	76	8	32	7
Calhoun	15	12	16	2	18	3	1	11	3
Charleston	831	622	318	119	344	181	22	101	40
Cherokee	179	142	86	10	94	52	6	21	15
Chester	44	23	23	1	29	16	0	11	2
Chesterfield	157	114	51	38	29	11	1	10	7
Clarendon	81	63	31	16	29	22	3	1	3
Colleton	79	56	63	27	57	34	1	21	1
Darlington	162	167	87	61	65	32	9	18	6
Dillon	170	63	26	5	48	17	16	12	3
Dorchester	160	94	41	16	55	21	14	15	5
Edgefield	18	17	9	1	3	0	0	3	0



OUTCOMES BY COUNTY

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State Total	9,795	6,813	4,158	33% (1,393)	3,956	52% (2053)	12% (457)	26% (1,059)	10% (387)
Fairfield	68	39	40	20	48	18	4	21	5
Florence	165	100	100	19	93	52	5	24	12
Georgetown	75	25	40	13	32	20	3	5	4
Greenville	968	695	479	92	390	185	55	105	45
Greenwood	47	30	61	16	61	46	4	7	4
Hampton	7	8	9	2	6	2	0	0	4
Horry	517	434	266	97	262	164	30	52	16
Jasper	33	30	27	4	11	6	0	1	4
Kershaw	109	61	63	26	48	24	1	11	9
Lancaster	193	133	94	17	72	45	2	15	10
Laurens	273	200	110	23	120	57	16	38	9
Lee	17	9	9	3	10	4	1	2	3
Lexington	630	364	181	73	183	79	36	55	13
Marion	102	24	27	1	34	18	1	11	4
Marlboro	30	4	15	5	13	4	1	8	0
McCormick	1	2	7	1	7	7	0	0	0
Newberry	93	41	23	13	15	7	2	2	4
Oconee	320	206	78	38	84	47	15	7	15
Orangeburg	184	88	63	10	64	30	5	23	6
Pickens	374	223	129	38	109	34	18	43	14
Richland	734	593	549	127	504	362	19	94	29
Saluda	14	10	13	1	3	1	1	1	0
Spartanburg	1086	745	290	140	316	114	93	84	25
Sumter	208	176	58	36	48	20	6	18	4
Union	17	11	21	10	25	16	0	7	2
Williamsburg	36	25	9	2	4	1	2	0	1
York	348	227	146	88	129	62	16	39	12

BARRIERS BY COUNTY



The FCRB is statutorily mandated to report deficiencies in the child welfare system. One tool for measuring deficiencies is areas of concern. These are defined as non-compliance with federal and state law and/or DSS policy and are identified during the review of a child's case.

The following table summarizes data collected during reviews held in calendar year 2018. The data compares areas of concern in individual counties. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Areas of Concern

County	Total Areas of Concern	Areas of Concern per Child	Case Plan Barriers	Agency Policy Violations	Legal Barriers	Hearings Not Held	Hearings Not Held Timely	Adoption Service Delays
State Total	12,960	2.1%	26% (3,362)	28% (3,691)	34% (4,437)	11%(141)	6% (724)	5% (605)
Abbeville	46	4.6	10	21	12	0	1	2
Aiken	298	1.5	118	84	53	1	5	37
Allendale	4	.08	1	0	3	0	0	0
Anderson	753	1.7	161	192	229	0	126	45
Bamberg	63	3.7	31	12	14	0	1	5
Barnwell	35	0.9	7	4	20	0	2	2
Beaufort	145	1.7	64	18	57	0	2	4
Berkeley	362	2.1	71	104	119	0	18	50
Calhoun	34	2.8	11	6	13	0	0	4
Charleston	1,764	2.8	376	576	597	35	112	68
Cherokee	240	1.6	76	26	123	1	9	5
Chester	89	2.8	23	26	23	0	3	14
Chesterfield	104	0.9	14	27	57	0	4	2
Clarendon	58	.09	4	8	17	1	26	2
Colleton	62	1.1	7	15	16	0	18	6
Darlington	234	1.4	22	57	130	0	11	14
Dillon	25	.03	16	2	7	0	0	0
Dorchester	120	1.2	24	26	59	4	4	3
Edgefield	31	1.8	20	2	8	0	1	0



BARRIERS BY COUNTY

Areas of Concern

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State Total	12,960	2.1%	26% (3,362)	28% (3,691)	34% (4,437)	11%(141)	6% (724)	5% (605)
Fairfield	117	3.0	44	25	25	0	3	20
Florence	102	1.0	26	6	64	0	6	0
Georgetown	45	1.8	11	9	24	0	0	1
Greenville	1,290	1.8	252	504	392	3	51	88
Greenwood	76	2.5	23	25	21	3	4	0
Hampton	17	2.1	3	7	5	0	0	2
Horry	614	1.4	123	275	190	7	12	7
Jasper	52	1.7	5	8	33	0	2	4
Kershaw	95	1.5	22	28	30	0	9	6
Lancaster	435	3.1	150	93	144	2	30	16
Laurens	568	2.8	105	271	155	0	26	11
Lee	31	3.4	3	19	9	0	0	0
Lexington	435	1.1	157	39	223	0	11	5
Marion	43	1.7	14	6	18	0	0	5
Marlboro	2	.05	1	1	0	0	0	0
McCormick	14	7.0	0	6	8	0	0	0
Newberry	40	.09	21	8	11	0	0	0
Oconee	258	1.2	93	5	135	0	21	4
Orangeburg	156	1.7	46	33	63	4	8	2
Pickens	387	1.7	123	118	119	3	2	22
Richland	2,055	3.4	678	582	597	74	95	29
Saluda	10	1.0	1	1	3	0	5	0
Spartanburg	1,047	1.4	252	263	404	1	68	59
Sumter	222	1.2	35	67	67	1	16	36
Union	31	2.8	6	11	14	0	0	0
Williamsburg	20	.08	0	3	13	0	4	0
York	331	1.4	112	72	113	1	8	25

AWARDS



The State Board of Directors selects a Review Board and Review Board Member of the Year. Community partners, staff and Review Board members nominate boards and individual members. The Professional Development and Awards Committee of the State Board reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the State Board.

Local Review Board 7D Spartanburg County was selected as the 2018 Review Board of the Year. Review Board 7D Members include **Melissa Sprouse, Chuck Horton, Monica Hill, Glenda Sims and Bill Bond**. This board is passionate about improving the lives of foster children in Spartanburg County, while also supporting DSS staff who served the children. In 2018 Review Board 7D members were intentional about celebrating, encouraging and supporting DSS staff who went beyond the call of duty.

**Review Board
of the Year
Review Board**

Board members provided Starbucks gift cards to case managers who did an outstanding job in advocating for permanency for the children in foster care. 7D board members also provided snacks in the breakroom for DSS staff. In addition, after every review board meeting, the board members would meet with supervisors, coordinators and directors about the successes and areas of concern for the caseloads. During these productive meetings board members, coordinators and directors were able to come together with solutions to effectively serve the families in the foster care system. The nominator of this board reported that multiple members of the board would substitute for additional boards in Spartanburg county and surrounding areas.



Left to right: Bill Bond, Review Board staff Shallia Belton, Melissa Sprouse and State Board Chairperson Monica Hill



Left to right: Bill Bond, Melissa Sprouse, Monica Hill, Review Board staff Christina Grant and Glenda Sims



AWARDS

Review Board Member of the Year

Millercin Weeks of Review Board 5B: Richland County is the 2018 Review Board Member of the Year. Ms. Weeks has been a member of 5B since 2014 and has served as a permanent substitute for Florence and York Boards. In addition, she served as a substitute countless times in Charleston, Greenwood, Orangeburg, Lexington, Sumter, Richland and Darlington/Chesterfield, Ms. Weeks has a group of friends she calls the ***Vigilante Grannies***. Over the years, she has kept them apprised of information regarding foster care and encouraged them to speak to their sororities, church groups, bridge clubs and influential neighbors to support child welfare issues.

Millercin and her group of *Vigilante Grannies* provided luggage for children in foster care and money to a foster youth for her high school pageant. In her role as a chairperson, Ms. Weeks attended several court cases, sometimes waiting for days for a case to be heard. One of the nominators stated that "Ms. Weeks serves her community and everything she does is selfless, always wanting to help someone to do or be better. She always has encouraging words for parents and case workers and will tell them the hard truth in order to help them be better at what they are doing in the future". Another person stated that, "Ms. Weeks travels with no complaints and always has a smile on her face even in rough situations and difficult cases. Ms. Weeks is fearless, wise, and wonderful and always has a story that makes you think and want to learn more."



Left to right: Lisa Armstrong, FCRB Director, Shallia Belton, Jo Hecker, Millercin Weeks and Monica Hill, State Board Chairperson

AWARDS



Vernon Lee McCurry, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award

On March 3, 2019, the Foster Care Review Board mourned the passing of one of our longest-serving members, Vernon Lee McCurry, Jr. Vernon was born in Asheville, North Carolina, educated at Wake Forest, and later moved to Greenville, S.C., with his wife, Peggy, with whom he shared two sons and two daughters-in-law.

From 1998 until his death in 2019, Vernon served the Foster Care Review Board 13C. From 2002 until 2014, Vernon served continuously on the Foster Care Review State Board, serving two terms as Board Chairman. Vernon was known for bringing a clear focus to the work of the State Board, an accomplishment that was recognized by his fellow Board members in 2014.

Vernon was known for his success in business and he placed great emphasis on the concept of "value added" through collaboration to the work he performed on behalf of the Board. Vernon was known for his dogged and relentless effort to promote the welfare of the children he served.



To honor his more than 20 years of service as a member of the Foster Care Review Board, the Vernon Lee McCurry, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award was created. This award was presented posthumously at the Review Board's Annual Professional Development Day on May 17, 2019. This year's event was held at Columbia College and during the event, State Board member Jo Hecker presented the first Vernon L. McCurry, Jr Lifetime Achievement Award along with a monetary donation to the South Carolina Heart Gallery Foundation.

The Foster Care Review Board will miss Vernon and his tremendous energy on behalf of children in care.



Jo Hecker presenting the Vernon Lee McCurry, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award.



VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

**Thank you
State Board & Foster Care Review Board Volunteers**



VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS



THE JOY OF VOLUNTEERISM

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace." --Kofi Annan

The true starting point for the history of volunteerism may never be fully known, or even fully knowable. It certainly seems as though human beings have been coming together for shared purposes for as long as they have inhabited the Earth. While certain voluntary acts are prompted by pragmatic and/or survival-based reasons, such as individual action set in motion by a natural disaster or some life-threatening situation, other voluntary behaviors stem from a constructive altruism or religious and spiritual beliefs that place a high value on service to others. No matter the reason, there seems to be no stopping human beings from rushing to the aid of one another, or from acting on behalf of a cause for a purpose greater than self-enrichment.

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." --Martin Luther King, Jr.

Formal, organized volunteer action is a relatively recent, though extremely well-embraced and impactful, phenomenon in America. In the mid-1800s, numerous volunteer-based organizations seeking to improve the lives of the less fortunate were founded, many of which are still in operation and continue to serve local communities throughout the United States, including The YMCA (1851), YWCA (1858), the Salvation Army (1865) and the Red Cross (1881). Today, the societal contributions of volunteer service are so enormous that an actual monetary value was calculated by the Independent Sector¹ who placed a wage equivalent on volunteer service as being \$25.43 per hour. Similarly, the United Nations produces a yearly report on world-wide volunteerism. The UN research results revealed:

"The global informal and formal volunteer workforce [is estimated] at 109 million full-time equivalent workers. [And] (i)f these full-time volunteer workers constituted a country, the workforce of "Volunteeria" would be the fifth largest in the world... roughly equivalent to the number of employed people in Indonesia. Looked at another way, the full-time equivalent size of this global volunteer workforce exceeds that of many major global industries." ²

In addition to contributing to the overall well-being of individual communities, volunteering is also a potent form of self-care. Believe it! Research suggests that volunteering is positively correlated with improved health³; in other words, doing good for others is also doing good for yourself. The Mayo Clinic studied the health impact of volunteer action and discovered that, "especially for older adults," six key health benefits were found to occur for those who engage in volunteering⁴, including: a decrease in the risk of depression, a sense of purpose and learning of valuable skills, being physically and mentally active, reduced stress levels, longer life expectancy, and providing opportunities for meeting new people and developing new relationships. Likewise, a study of disabled veterans suffering from PTSD and/or depression concluded that involvement in volunteering caused a decrease in these mental health problems.⁵

"The only person with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you." – John E. Southard



VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”—Dr. Seuss

With approximately 200 volunteers throughout our state, volunteers of the Foster Care Review Board serve an essential role in South Carolina’s child welfare system by promoting safe, permanent homes for children in foster care. Through conscientious case review and advocacy, we are making a positive difference in the lives of our state’s youngest and most vulnerable population. In advocating for children and families to receive the services and care that they need, we are also helping to build greater community resilience. The work of the Foster Care Review Board is also now (as of July 1, 2019) part of a new child-serving state agency—the South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy. With the appointment of our state’s first State Child Advocate, Amanda F. Whittle, our state has affirmed its commitment to make child welfare a top priority. We are looking forward to the year ahead and we thank all the volunteers for their selfless dedication to protecting our state’s children and promoting their interest in having a safe, loving and permanent home.

State Board Chairperson, Monica Githens Hill

State Board Member, Dan Bracken

State Board Member Martha (Sissy) Brock

State Board Member, Jo Hecker

State Board Member, Chuck F. Koches

State Board Member, Andrea McCoy

¹The Independent Sector is an organization that tracks and collects statistical information on charities. <https://independentsector.org/about-us/>

²The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 to address global issues such as human rights, globalization, terrorism and climate change. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/overview/> The Center for Volunteering. (2018). UN’s state of the world’s volunteerism report 2018: the thread that binds. Retrieved from <https://www.volunteering.com.au/uns-state-of-the-worlds-volunteerism-report-2018-the-thread-that-binds/>

³Lett, Bryan (2018). Study shows volunteering improves mental health in veterans. Retrieved from <https://www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2018/study-shows-volunteering-improves-mental-health-veterans> The Mayo Clinic. (2017a). Helping people, changing lives: the 6 health benefits of volunteering. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/helping-people-changing-lives-the-6-health-benefits-of-volunteering>

⁴The Mayo Clinic. (2017b). Helping people, changing lives: the 6 health benefits of volunteering. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/helping-people-changing-lives-the-6-health-benefits-of-volunteering>

⁵The Mayo Clinic. (2017c). Helping people, changing lives: the 6 health benefits of volunteering. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/helping-people-changing-lives-the-6-health-benefits-of-volunteering>

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS



Volunteer Hours

In 2018, nearly 200 volunteers contributed 9,788 hours to serve the state of South Carolina. The hours were spent reviewing cases and providing additional services to board members' individual communities.

FCRB volunteers are objective, independent reviewers of cases of children in foster care. Local review boards held 420 meetings and spent hours 7,701 reviewing cases for 6,812 children in foster care. The review boards issued Advisory Recommendations to DSS and the Family Court for permanent case plans for each child reviewed and identified areas of non-compliance with DSS policy or statutes in each case. Local review boards contributed the following in 2018:

- **26** review boards completed service projects to support programs and events for children in foster care and those who serve them.
- **22** review boards sponsored Heart Gallery exhibits or donated refreshments and assisted at photo shoots where children who are legally free for adoption had professional photographs taken for adoptive recruitment.
- **8** review boards participated in quarterly meetings with child-welfare partners to discuss trends and issues impacting children in foster care.
- **11** review boards provided quarterly reports or presented the Annual Report to legislators on local review board activities and trends impacting children in foster care.



Local Review Board member Ann Nichols volunteered during a Heart Gallery photo shoot.



STATE BOARD AND STAFF

STATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2nd Congressional District, Richland County
1st Congressional District, Berkeley County
3rd Congressional District, Greenville County
4th Congressional District, Spartanburg County
5th Congressional District, Cherokee County
6th Congressional District, Richland County
7th Congressional District

Jo Hecker
Charles (Chuck) Koches
Dan Bracken
Monica Hill, Chairperson
Martha (Sissy) Brock
Andrea McCoy
Vacant

STATE OFFICE STAFF

Director

Lisa Armstrong

Program Director

Stephanie Spink

Program Supervisors

Christina Grant

Doretta Crosson-Irby

Review Board Coordinators

Shallia Belton

Melissa Burroughs

Ashlee Patterson

Coretta Bush-Etheredge

Jessica Haygood

Malory Hogg

Rachel Johnson

Kristin McGill

Corlette Minor

Chloe Taylor

Latavial Williams

Millie Qualls

Latrice Williams

Amanda Blackmon

Hayley Salley

Vacant

Heart Gallery Program Director

Lola Robertson

Heart Gallery Program Coordinator

Joy Manning

Heart Gallery Recruitment Specialists

Heather Valentine

Staff Attorney

Ashley Wilson

Statistical/Research Analyst

Administrative Coordinator

Administrative Assistants

FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

Advocating Permanent Families for Children



MAILING ADDRESS:

Foster Care Review Board
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 436
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Email: fcrb@childadvocate.sc.gov

Phone: 803-734-0480

Fax: 803-734-1223

Website: <http://fcrb.sc.gov>

VISION

South Carolina will make child well being a top priority by assuring safe, permanent families for all children in foster care.

MISSION

The mission of the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board is to provide external accountability for the foster care system and to advocate on behalf of children in foster care.